



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 13-02-2025

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Kanjar Tribe

Syllabus: GS-1; Tribes of India

Context

- The Kanjar tribe, a historically nomadic group in North India, Pakistan, and Kashmir, has recently been in the news due to a tragic incident in Bihar, India.
- A teenage member of the tribe was reportedly beaten to death by fellow tribe members near Chainpur Bazaar in East Champaran district.
- This incident highlights the ongoing struggles and challenges faced by the Kanjar community, which continues to grapple with social and economic marginalization.

Key Details About the Kanjar Tribe:

1. Historical Background:

- The Kanjar tribe was labeled a "criminal tribe" during British colonial rule under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. This stigmatization persisted for decades, affecting their social standing and livelihoods.
- After India's independence in 1947, the tribe was officially decriminalized, but the stigma and discrimination have lingered.

2. Demographics and Lifestyle:

- The Kanjar population is estimated to be around 5,000 in Pakistan, with a larger presence in North India. However, accurate census data is lacking.
- The tribe is landless and lacks permanent shelters. They traditionally move from place to place, carrying their belongings on mule-drawn carts or donkeys.

3. Occupations:

- Historically, the Kanjar have been associated with hunting, fishing, basket weaving, and entertainment. Their nomadic lifestyle often limits their access to stable employment and education.

4. Language and Culture:

- The Kanjar speak multiple languages, including Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and Sindhi. Their native language, Kanjari, has similarities to Indo-Aryan Prakrits and Romani.
- The tribe is known for its vibrant folk traditions, including the popular dance form called Chakri.

Recent Challenges:

The recent incident in Bihar underscores the internal and external challenges faced by the Kanjar tribe:

- **Social Stigma:** Despite decriminalization, the Kanjar continue to face discrimination and exclusion from mainstream society.
- **Economic Hardship:** Their nomadic lifestyle and lack of land ownership make it difficult to access education, healthcare, and stable employment.
- **Internal Conflicts:** The tragic death of the teenager highlights potential tensions within the community, possibly exacerbated by poverty and social pressures.

Efforts for Improvement:

- There have been some efforts by NGOs and government programs to uplift marginalized tribes like the Kanjar.
- However, much more needs to be done to address their socio-economic challenges and integrate them into mainstream society.
- Initiatives focusing on education, skill development, and land rights could significantly improve their quality of life.
- The Kanjar tribe's rich cultural heritage and resilience deserve recognition and support.
- Addressing their struggles requires a concerted effort from both the government and civil society to ensure their rights and dignity are upheld.

Santorini Island

Syllabus: GS-1; Geography

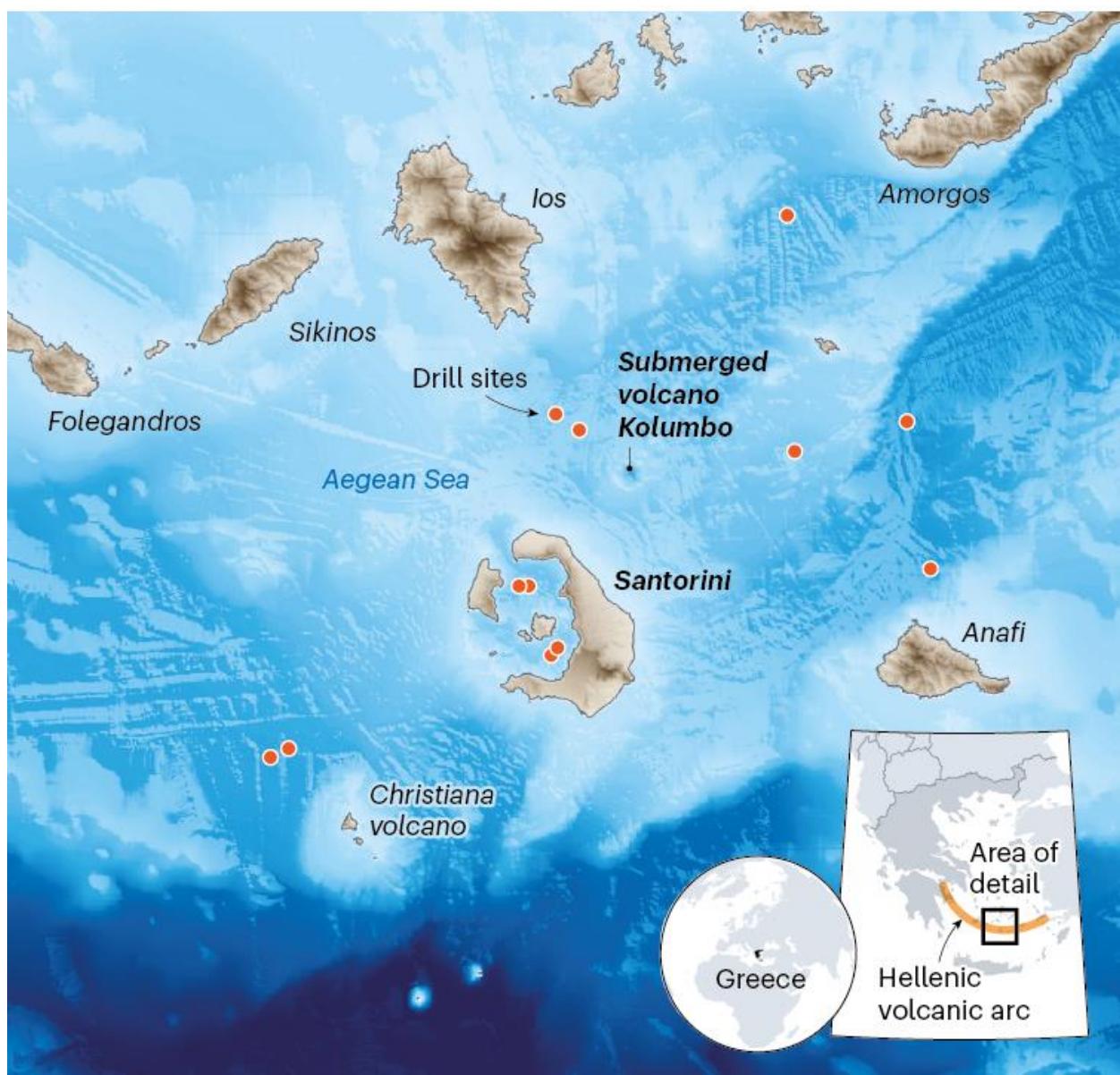
Context

- Thousands of residents and tourists have fled Santorini after a swarm of earthquakes shook the Aegean Sea on Tuesday morning.
- The earthquakes ranged between 4.0 and 5.0 on the Richter scale.

About Santorini Island

1. Location:

- Santorini (also called Thera) is a volcanic crater island in the southern Aegean Sea, southeastern Greece.
- It is the southernmost island in the Cyclades group.
- Located approximately 128 nautical miles southeast of the Greek mainland and 63 nautical miles north of Crete.



2. Geological Significance:

- Formed by a massive volcanic eruption around 3,600 years ago.
- Part of the South Aegean Volcanic Arc, one of the most active volcanic regions in Europe.

- Home to one of the few active volcanoes in Greece and Europe.

3. Key Features:

- Famous for its sea-filled volcanic caldera surrounded by high, colorful cliffs.
- Known for its iconic whitewashed houses, blue-domed churches, and stunning sunsets.
- Features dramatic landscapes, crystal-clear blue waters, and the ancient settlement of Thira.

4. Tourism and Culture:

- A world-renowned tourist destination for its beauty and unique geology.
- The ancient Minoan settlement of Akrotiri, preserved under volcanic ash, is a major archaeological site.

Current Situation

- The recent earthquake swarm has sparked fears of volcanic reactivation.
- Experts are assessing the risk, but no immediate threat has been confirmed.
- Residents and visitors are advised to stay informed and follow safety guidelines.

Pinaka Multiple Rocket Launch System

Syllabus: GS-3; Science and Tech

Context

- The Union Defence Ministry of India has recently signed contracts worth **₹10,147 crore** for the procurement of various types of ammunition for the Indian Army's **Pinaka Multiple Rocket Launch Systems (MRLS)**.

About Pinaka Multiple Rocket Launch System (MRLS)

- The **Pinaka MRLS** is a **battle-proven, all-weather, indirect area fire artillery weapon system** designed to deliver a high volume of firepower against enemy targets. It was developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, specifically by the **Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE)**.

- The system first saw action during the **Kargil War in 1999**, where it played a crucial role in neutralizing Pakistani positions on mountain tops, demonstrating its effectiveness in high-altitude warfare.



Key Features of Pinaka MRLS

- **Rapid Response and Accuracy:**
 - The system is known for its **quick response time** and **high pointing accuracy**, enabling it to deliver a large volume of fire against critical and time-sensitive enemy targets within a very short time frame.
- **Payload Capacity:**
 - Each launcher carries **12 rockets**, and a standard battery consists of **six launchers**, totaling **72 rockets**. This allows for massive firepower deployment in a short duration.
- **Versatile Warheads:**
 - The Pinaka system can deliver a variety of warheads, including **high-explosive (HE)** and **submunitions**, making it adaptable to different combat scenarios.
- **Range:**
 - The system has an effective range of **60 to 75 kilometers**, allowing it to strike deep into enemy territory.

➤ **Guidance System:**

- While the initial versions of Pinaka were **unguided**, the newer **Pinaka Guided** version incorporates **Inertial Navigation System (INS)** and **Global Positioning System (GPS)** for **precision strikes**.

➤ **Mobility:**

- The system is mounted on a **Tatra truck**, providing high mobility and allowing it to be rapidly deployed across various terrains.

Significance of the Recent Contract

- The recent contract worth **₹10,147 crore** highlights the Indian Army's focus on modernizing its artillery capabilities.
- The procurement of ammunition for the Pinaka MRLS will ensure sustained operational readiness and enhance the system's effectiveness in both conventional and high-altitude warfare scenarios.

Future Developments

- The Pinaka system continues to evolve, with ongoing efforts to enhance its range, accuracy, and versatility.
- The development of the **Pinaka Guided** version marks a significant step toward achieving precision strike capabilities, reducing collateral damage, and increasing operational efficiency.
- The Pinaka MRLS remains a cornerstone of India's artillery forces, providing a formidable deterrent against potential adversaries and reinforcing India's defense preparedness.

Bryospilus Bharaticus

Syllabus: GS-3; Science and Technology

Context

- A new species of water flea, **Bryospilus (Indobryospilus) bharaticus n. sp.**, was recently discovered in the moss growth on the walls of **Korigad Fort near Pune, India**.
- This discovery marks the first record of the genus **Bryospilus** in **Tropical Asia**, making it a significant addition to the biodiversity of the region.



About *Bryospilus Bharaticus*

- **Classification:** It belongs to the genus *Bryospilus*, a group of water fleas (cladocerans) within the crustacean class.
- **Discovery Significance:** This is the first time a species from this genus has been identified in Tropical Asia, highlighting the unique biodiversity of the region.
- **Adaptations:** The species has evolved specialized features to thrive in semi-terrestrial habitats, such as water films on moss.

Key Features of *Bryospilus Bharaticus*

- **Locomotion:**
 - It uses its **antennae** as supports to crawl through thick, debris-filled water films on moss.
 - The antennae are equipped with **large spines** that aid in sideways and forward movement.
- **Vision:**
 - The species lacks a **main eye**, as it lives in low-light environments where color distinction is unnecessary for foraging.
- **Habitat Adaptations:**
 - It is adapted to semi-terrestrial environments, such as water films on moss, which are distinct from the open-water habitats of its distant relatives.

Distribution and Habitat

- **Global Distribution:** Relatives of *Bryospilus bharaticus* are found in semi-terrestrial habitats in **rainforests of West Africa, South and Central America, and New Zealand**.

- **Habitat in India:** The species was discovered in moss growth on the walls of Korigad Fort, indicating its preference for **semi-terrestrial, moss-covered environments**.
- **Evolutionary History:** The ancestors of this species may have been present on the Indian subcontinent before the breakup of **Gondwanaland** around 200 million years ago.

What Are Water Fleas?

- **Classification:** Water fleas are small aquatic crustaceans belonging to the group **Cladocera**.
- **Diet:** They primarily feed on **small algae**, which they filter from the water.
- **Habitat:** Commonly found in freshwater environments such as **rivers, ponds, and pools**.
- **Ecological Role:** Water fleas play a crucial role in aquatic ecosystems as they are part of the **zooplankton community**, serving as a food source for larger aquatic organisms.

Significance of the Discovery

- The discovery of **Bryospilus bharaticus** underscores the importance of studying lesser-known habitats, such as moss-covered walls, for uncovering new species.
- It also provides insights into the evolutionary history and adaptations of semi-terrestrial crustaceans.
- This finding highlights the rich biodiversity of the Western Ghats region and the need for continued exploration and conservation efforts.

Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

- The **2025 annual bird count** at **Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary** has revealed a remarkable increase in waterfowl populations.
- Officials recorded a total of **1,53,719 birds** belonging to **97 species**, marking an unprecedented surge in avian activity at the sanctuary.

- This highlights the sanctuary's critical role as a habitat for migratory and resident bird species, particularly along the **trans-Himalayan flyway**.



About Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Pong Dam Lake**, also known as **Maharana Pratap Sagar**, is a **man-made reservoir** created by the construction of the **Pong Dam** on the **Beas River**.
- Located in the **Shivalik hills** of **Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh**, it is one of the **largest man-made wetlands** in **Northern India**, covering an area of approximately **307 square kilometers**.
- The sanctuary was designated a **Ramsar site** in **2002**, recognizing its ecological significance as a wetland of international importance.

Key Features:

- **Flora:**
The sanctuary boasts a diverse range of vegetation, including **submerged aquatic plants, grasslands, and forests**. Common tree species include **eucalyptus, acacia, and shisham**.
- **Fauna:**
The sanctuary is a biodiversity hotspot, particularly for birds. Over **220 bird**

species have been recorded, including **54 species of waterfowl**. Notable avian species include:

- **Bar-headed geese**
- **Pintails**
- **Common pochards**
- **Coots**
- **Grebes**
- **Cormorants**
- **Herons**
- **Storks**
- **Peafowl**
- **Grey partridges**

➤ The sanctuary is also home to a variety of mammals, such as:

- **Sambar deer**
- **Barking deer**
- **Wild boar**
- **Nilgai**
- **Clawless otter**
- **Leopard**

Ecological Significance:

➤ Pong Dam Lake serves as a crucial **stopover point** for migratory birds traveling along the **Central Asian Flyway**.

➤ Its rich biodiversity and wetland ecosystem make it a vital conservation area for both flora and fauna.

Conservation Efforts:

➤ The recent surge in bird populations underscores the success of ongoing conservation initiatives at the sanctuary.

➤ Efforts to protect the wetland habitat, regulate human activities, and promote eco-tourism have contributed to the sanctuary's thriving ecosystem.

➤ The **Ramsar designation** has further bolstered global recognition and support for its preservation.

- The **2025 bird count** not only reflects the sanctuary's ecological health but also highlights the importance of continued conservation efforts to sustain this unique habitat for future generations.